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Testimony in support of: House Bill 886: Relating to the repeal of the prohibition against certain municipal or county regulation of the rental or leasing of housing accommodations.

Submitted by:
Texas Homeless Network
Eric Samuels
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Austin, TX 78704

Chairman Cortez, and members of the Committee,

We support House Bill 886. There are over 27,000 people experiencing homelessness in TX each night. The only way we can reduce these numbers is by increasing our stock of deeply affordable and supportive housing. One of the easiest ways to do that is by opening opportunities for homeless response systems to use housing vouchers through naturally occurring stock of affordable housing units rather than constructing new housing.

However, these units are all too often “closed” to people escaping homelessness because of landlord discrimination. This further reduces options in Texas communities that are more and more becoming unaffordable for low-income renter households. This means that the opportunities to use housing vouchers are even more scarce within the private market than just a few years ago. The discriminatory limitation of opportunities for people using housing vouchers is a barrier.

This bill, if passed, would allow communities to decide for themselves if reducing barriers to housing and reducing obstacles for those striving to exit homelessness is important enough to prevent housing voucher discrimination against its own citizens. We feel it’s important to allow communities to fight housing voucher discrimination, so we support HB 886.

Sincerely,

Eric Samuels
President/CEO
Texas Homeless Network